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SUBJECT: WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST; SECRETARY RICE'S VISIT TO THE  
REGION; ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION VIS-@-VIS THE WAR;  
VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT CHAVEZ'S TRIP TO BIELO-RUSSIA AND RUSSIA;  
CASTRO AND MERCOSUR; 07/25/06

## 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's key international stories include the situation in the Middle East; US Secretary of State Condoleezza's rice to the region; the Argentine Government's position vis-`-vis the war in Lebanon and Israel; Venezuelan President Chavez's trip to Bielo-Russia and Russia; and the failure of the Doha Round trade liberalization talks.

## 2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "The only truth is death"

Left-of-center "Pagina 12" carries an opinion piece by contributor Washington Uranga, who opines (07/25) "Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Colombia, Gaza, Israel, Lebanon, Africa..., so many other places. Reasons and arguments to kill or let someone die are different.

"... Those who should be held responsible are the ones who impose their own rules on the world in order to 'civilize' it and brag about their offensive and devastating power. Those are the same ones who killed yesterday and today are asking for 'common sense' from others or are condemning actions that are similar to the ones they committed. Does Mr. Bush remember?

"... Terrorists are not the only fanatics. Countries and systems are also terrorists. Both of them kill. When only war and death prevail, the peoples' hopes to build their own fate are murdered. When life is defeated, death is the only truth while reasons are too abundant."

- "Terms"

Paula Lugones, international columnist for leading "Clarín," comments (07/25) "Condoleezza Rice landed in Beirut and today she will negotiate with Israel, but the US' stance has not changed - it seeks a ceasefire with guarantees that it will be a long-term ceasefire. In diplomatic language, this means time. And time is precisely what is benefiting Hezbollah.

"... Theoretically, the Israeli Armed forces are definitely superior, but Hezbollah has been trained for years and resistance means victory for it. The longer the time, the stronger Hezbollah will feel. A definitive military solution seems remote. It is urgent to give way to politics."

- "Condoleezza Rice negotiates a truce in Beirut and travels to Jerusalem"

Maria Laura Avignolo, on special assignment in Beirut for leading "Clarín," writes (07/25) "When US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice surprisingly arrived in Beirut on Monday, the Lebanese government was making progress on a diplomatic solution to obtain 'an immediate cease fire' with Israel and a global solution..."

"The secret of the Lebanese proposal lies on the Chebaa farms, a small 40-km territory in dispute that is being occupied by Israel and is near Syria's Golan Heights. This site... gives Hezbollah an excuse to argue that its country remains occupied and to launch attacks against Israel in a region that, according to the UN, belongs to Syria.

"Lebanese PM Fouad Siniora has proved to be a shrewd and firm diplomat in the crisis. In his negotiations, he wants to deploy an international force near the Chebaa farms to remove Hezbollah's excuse to attack Israel because in this case Lebanon would no longer be occupied. In this way, it could withdraw and disarm Hezbollah based on the will of most of the Lebanese people after a cease fire that would pave the way for negotiations."

- "Kirchner, in a delicate balance"

Mariano Obarrio, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (07/25) "Maintaining a good relationship with Israel is a priority for President Nestor Kirchner, but this does not imply that he will openly condemn Iran, Lebanon, and the Palestinian authorities or the armed organizations that Israel and the US label as 'fundamentalist terrorists.'"

"According to an Argentine Government official, 'the government will have a balanced position regarding the conflict in the Middle East.' This is the official position.

"There are different positions at the Government House. Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana and other government officials, like Oscar

Parrilli and Carlos Zannini, tend to be...with the Arabs. For his part, Cabinet head Alberto Fernandez has a more conservative position, which is in line with that of the US and Israel. Kirchner will have to balance his position.

"... Kirchner's closeness to Chavez and the cooling in the US-Argentine relationship have had its first unpredictable consequence. It almost passed unnoticed that US Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs Tom Shannon suspended his trip to Argentina, which was scheduled August 10. He had planned to attend a Council of the Americas' meeting, but he thought it was inopportune to do it."

- "Chavez multiplies his gestures against the US"

Business-financial "Ambito Financiero" reports (07/25) "Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a declared enemy of the USG, offered Bielo-Russian President Alexander Lukashenko to make up a 'fighting team' during his first meeting with the man the US termed as 'the last European dictator.'"

"... Both presidents are expected to analyze the bilateral ties between the two countries on economic issues, as well as the mutual diplomatic support at the UN.

"After arriving in Minsk, Chavez pointed out that he wishes to increase the bilateral economic cooperation, particularly in the energy sector, petrochemicals, machinery, education and science."

- "Venezuela, key Russian partner in Latin America"

Business-financial, center-right "InfoBae" reports (07/25) "In the framework of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's trip to Russia, Mijail Kaminin, spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry, asserted that the development of economic and trade relations between the two countries have 'considerable potential,' and no full advantage has been taken of it.

"He also asserted that Russia sees in Venezuela an influential Latin

American country and that, for the Kremlin, 'it is one of its key partners in the region.'"

- "Doha trade talks officially a bust"

Liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald" front-pages (07/25)  
"More than five years of 'Doha Round' trade liberalization talks collapsed yesterday as differences over farm aid proved unbridgeable.

"Pascal Lamy, director-general of the WTO, said a deal billed as a recipe for lifting millions of people worldwide out of poverty would not be reached by the end of the year and there was no new timetable for completing the round.

"... The 25-nation EU and Brazil criticized US intransigence over agricultural subsidies for the breakdown, while the US blamed Brazil and India for being inflexible on cutting barriers to industrial imports and the EU for refusing to make deeper cuts in its farm import tariffs.

"... Now the whole process of agreeing to a binding treaty may have to be put on ice until after US presidential elections in 2008."

### 13. EDITORIALS

- "Sending a White Helmets delegation"

Conservative "La Prensa" editorializes (07/25) "We should praise the Government's purpose in sending a White Helmets delegation to provide help in the Middle East war, which is focused on Lebanon.

"... In this framework, the Argentine participation should be careful and contribute to the largest possible degree of integration...

"In this aspect, the (Argentine) Foreign Ministry should take into account the positions assumed by the different countries of the region regarding the situation in the Middle East, and particularly the accords reached during the latest presidential summit in Cordoba, which expressly repudiated the confrontation while fostering alternative roads through international institutions."

- "Astonishing homage to a dictator"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" editorializes (07/25) "It is hard to

understand why Mercosur, which has a clause preventing tyrannical regimes from participating in it, has welcomed with honors the leader of a dictatorial government that has violated basic human rights for more than forty years.

"... Dr. Hilda Molina thanked President Kirchner's gesture to deliver a letter to Fidel Castro asking him to let the Cuban physician visit her relatives in Argentina for humanitarian reasons...

"Castro's visit to Argentina only left unanswered questions and deep doubts on the truthful democratic purposes of those who paid undeserved homage to him. We can only hope that the Mercosur democracies will not repeat the mistake they made when they decided to allow Venezuela's incorporation as a full member of the bloc in spite of the authoritarian features of its government."

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